

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1-3. (canceled).

4. (currently amended): A composition comprising a strain of lactic acid bacteria selected from the group consisting of a biologically pure culture of *Lactobacillus plantarum* ONRIC b0239 (FERM BP-10064) and a biologically pure culture of *Lactobacillus plantarum* ONRIC b0240 (FERM BP-10065), and an edible carrier, wherein the composition is capable of stimulating mucosal immunity, and is in the form of a food or beverage.

5. (canceled).

6. (previously presented): The composition according to claim 4, wherein said composition is a fermented milk, lactic acid bacteria beverage, fermented vegetable beverage, fermented fruit beverage, or fermented soymilk beverage.

7. (canceled).

8. **(withdrawn):** A method of stimulating mucosal immunity in a human subject in need of such stimulation, comprising administering to said human subject the composition of claim 4 or claim 17.

9. **(canceled).**

10. **(withdrawn - currently amended):** A method of promoting IgA production in a human subject in need of such IgA production promoting treatment, comprising
administering to said human subject the composition of claim 4 or 18.

11-15. **(canceled).**

16. **(currently amended):** The composition of claim 4, wherein said composition is in the form of granules, a powder, a tablet, an effervescent ~~tablet product~~ or a pudding.

17. **(currently amended):** A pharmaceutical composition for human mucosal immunostimulation comprising a strain of lactic acid bacteria selected from the group consisting of a biologically pure culture of *Lactobacillus plantarum* ONRIC b0239 (FERM BP-10064) and a biologically pure culture of *Lactobacillus plantarum* ONRIC b0240 (FERM BP-10065), and a pharmaceutically acceptable excipient or diluent.

18. **(currently amended):** A pharmaceutical composition for promoting human IgA production comprising a strain of lactic acid bacteria selected from the group consisting of a

biologically pure culture of *Lactobacillus plantarum* ONRIC b0239 (FERM BP-10064) and a
biologically pure culture of *Lactobacillus plantarum* ONRIC b0240 (FERM BP-10065), and a
pharmaceutically acceptable excipient or diluent.